

A PERIOD OF ARMED TRUCE

period following Curzon's ultimatum the Soviet Embassy in Teheran behaved in a less conspicuous and provocative way than had been the case under the first two envoys. Yet the Embassy was too convenient a place, owing to its extraterritoriality, to ignore completely its advantages as a safe liaison or even directing center. There were fluctuations in Soviet policy as to the degree to which the services of the Embassy should be utilized for the promotion of revolutionary work, but this institution was never completely eliminated from the over-all plans. The real field work had to be done, however, by instruments able to come into more direct touch with the population. And it was here that the Communist party and the Comintern came to the fore.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAN

Organizationally the Communist party of Iran was not a spontaneous Iranian creation. It had its beginnings in Russia. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 a Bolshevik group called *Adalat* ("Justice") was formed among the Iranian workers employed in the oil fields of Baku. At that time about 300,000 Iranians lived and worked in the border regions of Russia, the Caucasus and Turkestan. The original *Adalat* group in Baku counted about six thousand members. Its influence radiated to Turkestan and Iran. Its leader was Haidar Khan Am Oglu, a veteran of the Tabriz revolt against Mohammed Ali Shah of 1908-1909. Agents sent to Iran by Haidar Khan founded local committees of the party in Tabriz and in the Caspian provinces, as well as in Teheran. In Tabriz the movement was supported chiefly by the Baku Tatars and by the Armenians.

Many of them pretended to be refugees from the Bolshevik rule in the Caucasus, and the general chaos that had prevailed in the Caucasian and Transcaspian borderland since 1917 greatly facilitated their infiltration into Iran. The invasion of Gilan by the Red forces in the spring of 1920 and the subsequent proclamation of the Soviet Republic there gave impetus to the development of the party. Haidar Khan arrived from Baku and became a member of Kuchik Khan's Soviet. The movement was greatly strengthened by the fact that among the Soviet Azerbaijani troops operating in Gilan were units composed of indoctrinated Iranian oil workers from Baku. On July